

SANTA ROSA ISLAND:
An Archeological and Historical Study



By Francis R. Holland, Jr.



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SANTA ROSA ISLAND:

An Archeological and Historical Study

By Francis R. Holland, Jr.

ROUGHLY PARALLEL TO THE CALIFORNIA COAST from Ventura to Point Conception, the Santa Barbara Channel Islands comprise an elongated group of four islands running in a west-northwest direction. Anacapa is the easternmost island and San Miguel the most westerly. Between are the islands of Santa Cruz and Santa Rosa. Structurally, the islands are part of the Santa Monica Mountains, being an extension of this range. If the islands were raised 200 feet, they would all be connected but would still be disconnected from the Santa Monica Mountains, by a strait ten miles wide and 700 feet deep.¹ During the Pliocene period the islands were probably connected and joined to the mainland in the vicinity of Point Mugu. Sometime during the Pleistocene period they were separated from the mainland.²

At the time of separation animals became isolated on the islands. One such animal was the mammoth. Remains of this mammal were discovered on Santa Rosa Island at least as early as 1873. Later finds indicated that the species which inhabited the island was a smaller, or dwarf type, having a height at the shoulders of six to eight feet.³ In 1955, Phil C. Orr, curator of anthropology at the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, led an archeological expedition to Santa Rosa Island which found charred bones of a dwarf mammoth in a place

. . . indicating a pit or depression of some kind, and within this area the earth has been burned to a brick red and flecks of charcoal and burned bone are scattered through it.

This evidence and the presence of "rude chipped stone artifacts [and] a complete carbonized front foot" led Orr to conclude that "these skeletal parts . . . were left by ancient human hunters as a result of their slaughter and cooking for food." A Carbon 14 test run on one of these charred bones showed an age of 29,650 + 2,500 Before Present.⁴ Santa Rosa Island, then, would be the earliest known site of man in North America.

This evidence, despite its apparent conclusiveness, has not received unqualified acceptance by anthropologists. H. M. Wormington, who re-

flects current anthropological thought, believes that the existence of early man on Santa Rosa is possible, but it has not been proven conclusively.⁵ Robert F. Heizer of the University of California Archeological Survey says of the charred mammoth bones:

Until full details of occurrence are presented judgment as to the significance of this and other Santa Rosa Island dates should be avoided.⁶

The finding of the charred mammoth bones with the possible evidence of early man on Santa Rosa is certainly the most dramatic archeological event connected with the island. But it has not been the only activity archeologists have engaged in there. From February to June of 1901 Philip Mills Jones conducted diggings on the island, as did David Banks Rogers in the 1920's.⁷ The most concerted effort at excavating the island has been by the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History. Every year since 1946 an expedition from the museum has gone to the island. Their finds have been interesting, and a number of them have been carbon-dated. However, of the carbon dating, Heizer in 1958 said:

The large number of radiocarbon dates from the Santa Barbara region (mostly from Santa Rosa Island) are unfortunately not of much utility at the moment since the content of the culture phases mentioned are not detailed. We urgently need a fully developed report on Santa Rosa Island archaeology which contains detailed plans and profiles of all particular find sites with illustrations of artifacts, mammoth bones exhibiting the marks of human action, burials, etc., etc., etc.⁸

The museum's excavations have led Orr to conclude there were three cultures on the island; (1) Canalino, (2) Highlander, and (3) Dune Dweller. Carbon dating on three Canalino sites indicated that this culture on Santa Rosa may have extended as far back as 2,590 years ago. Dating on an abalone shell of the Highlander culture gave $5,370 \pm 150$ B.P. Of this latter culture Orr said in 1960,

[It] is not yet properly characterized, but at present appears to be confined to the highlands of the islands, occupying the tops of the slight knolls, and in the later sites still retains evidence of eight to ten foot house pits. Burials, so far as is known, are oriented with the head to the northwest, flexed and face-down, or on the left side. A total of 96 Highland sites are recognized on Santa Rosa . . .⁹

On the other hand, Rogers, as a result of his excavations in 1927, came to the conclusion that the Canalinos were the first occupants of Santa Rosa. He previously had delineated three cultures on the mainland in the Santa Barbara region. The first group were the Oak Grove people who tended to build their villages in oak groves. They disappeared for some unknown reason, and several centuries later evidence of the Hunting People begins to show itself. This group consisted of a "stalwart, athletic people" who possessed a "great number of heavy, efficient, flint weapons . . ." The Hunting People were never driven from their locality. At least some of them amalgamated with the third group — the

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Canalino — who were in full possession of the country by 1000 A.D. Rogers felt the Canalinos arrived on Santa Rosa during the middle period of the Hunting People, or "approximately two hundred years before the Canalino made his presence felt upon the mainland." He also estimated the population during the period of greatest prosperity as being about 6,000 persons.¹⁰

Rogers' belief that people of the Oak Grove and Hunting cultures never reached the islands is shared by Orr who has found no correlation between his Highlander and Dune Dweller culture and that of Rogers' Oak Grove and Hunting People.¹¹ Orr has, however, not ruled out completely the possibility of a relationship between the mainland Hunting People and the island Dune Dwellers.¹²

Despite the rather extensive archeological activity which has taken place on Santa Rosa, there is much to be learned about the island's prehistoric population. The island vicinity may present an opportunity to further the new field of underwater archeology, which perhaps will reveal deeper knowledge of the island's aboriginal inhabitants and additional information on the geological history of the off-shore islands.

When the first Europeans, led by Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo, sailed along the California Coast in 1542, they encountered on the Channel Islands Indians later known as Chumash. This term has primarily linguistic value and is applied to all the Indians living between Morro Bay and Malibu, including those living on adjacent islands. In 1929, D. B. Rogers designated those Chumash living along the Santa Barbara Channel as Canalino, which means simply Channel people.¹³

Rogers estimated the greatest Canalino population on Santa Rosa at any one time to be 6,000. Cabrillo visited the island in 1542 and mentioned only three towns: Nichochi, Coycoy, and Nimollollo. In 1805 Father Tapis reported Santa Rosa as having seven rancherias, or villages, with the largest one containing 120 natives. Kroeber located and listed seven rancherias on the island.¹⁴

The Canalino lived in large houses which were dome-shaped and covered with seagrass thatching. A hole in the top permitted smoke to escape. On Santa Rosa the ribs of whales were used in the construction of the houses. The Cabrillo expedition reported fifty persons living in each house. Other observations reported variously forty persons, three or four families, and eight to ten persons.¹⁵ Remains of one of these houses were discovered by Rogers on Santa Rosa in 1927. In the house raised platforms of rush mats served as beds.¹⁶

The other type of structure the Canalino had was the sweathouse, or *temescal* as the Spaniards called it. A fire in the center of this partially subterranean building furnished the necessary warmth. According to

one observer the male aborigine would seat himself and remain there until the perspiration flowed freely. Then he would dash out and jump into the ocean to bathe himself.¹⁷

Living near the seacoast, a principal ingredient in the diet of the Canalino was seafood, including both shellfish and fish. The latter were speared and netted, and caught with a peculiar circular shell fishhook which had to be swallowed by the fish to be caught. Mammals from the sea, such as seals, sea lions and whales, were also eaten. Acorns, ground and leached of their bitterness, were a staple. Among the more common objects found by archeologists are the flat, abraded stone, called a metate, and the mano, used in grinding the acorns.¹⁸

The Canalino manufactured bowls out of steatite obtained from Santa Catalina Island and fashioned trays and ladles out of wood. The Chumash also made clamshell disk bead currency and, according to Kroeber, were probably the chief suppliers of money used by the Indians in the southern part of the state. Their baskets were good, similar to the ones made by other Southern California Indians. One variation in their basket making was the use of asphaltum to make their baskets watertight. Small pieces of asphaltum, which seeps naturally from the ground on shores touching the Santa Barbara Channel, were placed in the baskets and smoothed out with hot pebbles.¹⁹

Archeologists have uncovered a type of dress not mentioned by the early observers. It was a grass skirt which reached to the knees. Each blade of grass was weighed down with a small ball of asphaltum. The more common skirt, often made of animal hides, was usually all that was worn by the women. The men generally went about naked. During cold weather they wore robes of twisted fur about the shoulders. The men were known to wear a heavy coat of paint when they attended dances.²⁰

The crowning achievement perhaps of Chumash culture was the plank canoe. Made of short planks lashed together by grass rope and the cracks sealed with asphaltum, the canoes were twenty to twenty-five feet in length and were variously reported by early observers as holding two to twenty persons. The early explorers along this coast were much taken with the craft. Sebastián Vizcaíno said the canoe was

so well constructed and built that since Noah's Ark a finer and lighter vessel with timbers better made has not been seen.

Costanso in 1769 said the Canalino's

. . . handiness and ability were at their best in the construction of their canoes made of good pine boards, well joined and calked, and of a pleasing form.

The plank canoe permitted easy access between the several islands and between the mainland and the island. Moreover, it gave a strong

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maritime cast to Canalino culture. Remains of plank canoes as well as stone carvings of them, were uncovered by Rogers on Santa Rosa Island in 1927. Not all Indians owned canoes and those who did were accorded a higher status. The canoe owner, or captain, was treated with deference, and did little of the manual labor usually connected with seafaring endeavors.²¹

The Spaniards found the Canalino to be far from hostile. Cabrillo bartered with them for fish and found the Indians "very friendly." The starving crew of Sebastián Cermeno's vessel in 1595 was given fish by natives from Santa Rosa Island. In 1602 the Indians of one of the islands implored Vizcaíno and his men to visit the island, promising

... ten women to sleep with.

Pedro Fages in 1769 said

... they receive the Spaniards well and make them welcome ...²²

The early Spaniards who settled California in general regarded the Chumash as superior to the other tribes of California. No resistance to subjugation was manifested by the Chumash except in 1824 when a short-lived rebellion occurred on the mainland. Kroeber feels that the spirit of the Chumash was broken which

produced a deep inward depression.

At one time this depression

... manifested itself in the alarming spread of the practice of abortion ...²³

The direct cause of the decline of the Chumash is hard to delineate. David Banks Rogers attributed it to diseases of the white man, to a too rapid change made by the missions, and to white man's vices. The *coup de grace* occurred when the missions were secularized and the padres were no longer present to protect the Indians from exploitation by Europeans.²⁴ Whatever the cause, the Chumash degenerated to a few drunken individuals "eking out a bare existence."²⁵

Indians on the islands suffered the same fate, and by the mid-1830's they were entirely gone from the islands. The island Indians did not have the missions to stand between them and the rapacity of foreigners. When the Spanish missionaries first came to Alta California, their leader, Fr. Junípero Serra, recommended not removing the Indians from the islands, but proposed that the padres

... should aim at winning the goodwill of those who come regularly from the islands to the mainland ...

He also proposed that a study of the islands be made to see

... if it be possible and advisable to establish missions there. ...

Governor Pedro Fages agreed that the Indians should not be removed

from the islands. Nothing was done, and in 1804 Father Tapis proposed establishing a mission on either Santa Cruz or Santa Catalina to convert the Indians who would join a mission on the mainland. He said that the Indians of the seven rancherias — the largest one containing 120 adults — on Santa Rosa were willing to move to Santa Cruz. This suggestion was at first approved, but a little later the president of the missions noted that measles had carried off over 200 Indians on Santa Cruz and Santa Rosa and doubted the necessity of establishing a mission on the island. It seems evident that the greatest activity of the missionaries which took place in regard to the island was writing. One mission historian has noted that

. . . there is nothing recorded to prove that the missionaries of either Santa Barbara or San Buenaventura ever crossed the channel and visited the islands.

Religious instruction received by the island Indians apparently was limited to that received on visits to the mainland and that from neophytes from the missions who visited the islands. These neophytes also were permitted to baptize, and on at least one occasion an Indian neophyte baptized over three dozen on the islands.²⁶

The decline of the Indians on the Channel Islands is generally attributed to the depredations of Aleut sea otter hunters. These Alaskan natives were brought to the California Coast in the early nineteenth century by English, American, and Russian vessels in the fur trade. Fierce and vicious, they often raided the islands and even the mainland. The Canalino Indians with their primitive weapons were no match for the musket-armed Aleuts who, according to one observer,

. . . attacked the almost defenseless natives, killing many of them, as the piles of human bones on these Islands . . . abundantly testify."²⁷

The raids may have been the factor which motivated a renewed interest in the removal of the Canalino from the islands. A visitor to the region in the early 1840's said,

[The Indians] have been withdrawn to the mainland to avoid abuse at the hands of American sailors and other foreigners who came over to hunt sea otter and fur seals.

In the late 1800's a mainland Indian testified that as a young boy he had made the trip to the islands to remove the remnants of the Indians there and that they were distributed to the several missions in the area. Just when the removal occurred cannot be determined. Perhaps it occurred in 1822, for in that year "a large number of islanders were baptized" at Santa Barbara Mission. In any event, the Canalino were gone from Santa Rosa at least by 1835.²⁸

Santa Rosa, along with the other seven off-shore islands of Southern California, was discovered in October, 1542, by Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo.

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Seeing the islands at a distance he apparently thought Santa Cruz and Santa Rosa were one island and named both of them San Lucas. A few days later he discovered San Miguel and applied "Islas de San Lucas" to all three islands. He noted that the Indians called the middle island, which was obviously Santa Rosa, "Nicalque." Later individual names were given to the flanking islands and the name San Lucas came to mean only the island the Indians called Nicalque. Little was noted of this island although the voyagers used its harbors occasionally to ride out storms and on at least one occasion obtained water on the island.²⁹

The next recorded European to visit the island was Sebastián Rodríguez Cermeno who, in November of 1595, had been shipwrecked at Drake's Bay. After fitting out a launch Cermeno and his crew resumed their exploring expedition southward. They had little food and had to obtain sustenance from the sea or by trading with the Indians. On December 14 they arrived at the Santa Barbara Channel Islands, noting first the islands of Santa Rosa and Santa Cruz. They paused at Santa Rosa where they obtained "eighteen fish and a seal . . ." from the Indians in exchange for which the Spaniards gave them "some pieces of taffeta and cotton cloth . . ." The crew obtained 30 additional fish by using their own lines, and late in the afternoon sailed the launch to the neighboring island of Santa Cruz. They spent the night there and the next day continued southward. Cermeno's only comment on the two islands was that they were "bare and sterile, although inhabited by Indians."³⁰

Seven years later Sebastián Vizcaíno was dispatched from New Spain to explore the outer coast of California to recommend a suitable way-station where the Manila galleons could pause to make repairs and obtain fresh food for scurvy-ridden crew and passengers, as well as, according to one participant, to seek the mythical Straits of Anián. Leaving Mexico in May, 1602, he journeyed slowly up the coast to Baja California and arrived in Alta California at San Diego in November. Departing here after a few days, he speeded up his voyage, for winter was approaching and more of his men were becoming ill. He continued up the coast, stopping at Santa Catalina and, apparently, giving the permanent names to the islands of Santa Barbara and San Nicolas. He sailed into the Santa Barbara Channel, named it, and, according to one historian, became the first to note the parallelism between these islands and the coast of the mainland. His three ships sailed between the islands and stopped several times, noting them as being "very well inhabited with people very friendly to the Spaniards." Vizcaíno and his men were invited by the Indians to visit the islands, each Spaniard being offered "ten women to sleep with." At another time they were invited to one of the islands by Indians who had come out in their canoe, but Vizcaíno declined as "there was such a heavy sea and the island presented so many shoals . . ." It is

interesting to note that the Indians in their plank canoes had ventured out into the "heavy seas." On several occasions Vizcaíno anchored off the various islands, and some of his men went ashore on them, but the accounts permit identification of only San Miguel.³¹

From the time of Vizcaíno to 1769 there is no present evidence that other Europeans sighted the islands, although it is highly probable that an occasional eastward-bound Manila galleon sighted them after making the southward turn to New Spain.

In 1769 Gaspar de Portolá was instructed to lead an expedition to Alta California and establish presidios at San Diego and Monterey. With him, as president of the missions, went Father Junípero Serra. Two ships, laden with supplies, had been instructed to meet the overland expedition at the port of San Diego. One of these ships was the *San Antonio*, commanded by Juan Pérez who had been told that San Diego lay in 34° latitude. As a result of this misinformation he missed the port and sailed to the vicinity of the Channel Islands. On several occasions parties went ashore on these islands, and one priest made many interesting and valuable notes about the aboriginal inhabitants of the islands. One of the priests aboard the vessel went ashore on one of the islands in the Santa Barbara Channel and inadvertently left a walking staff which was topped by a small iron cross. When he later returned to retrieve the staff, the Indians met him at the beach bearing it. This incident impressed the Spaniards and the name Santa Cruz (Holy Cross) was applied to the island. One prominent historian believes the incident actually occurred on Santa Rosa.³²

For the next twenty years the names of four the Santa Barbara Channel Islands shifted about. Costanso's map of 1770 has the three westerly islands listed as San Bernardo (San Miguel), San Miguel (Santa Rosa) and Santa Cruz. In 1774 Juan Pérez in the *Santiago* called them from west to east: Santa Rosa (San Miguel), Santa Margarita (Santa Rosa), Santa Cruz, and Santa Tomás (Anacapa). The English explorer George Vancouver obtained a Spanish chart in the early 1790's which gave the present names of the islands. He so listed these names on his own charts. Vancouver's charts became the basis for the admiralty charts which were popular among navigators, and as a result the names gained universal acceptance. However, as late as the 1840's, Santa Rosa was still known by some as San Miguel.³³

As a result of Captain James Cook's explorations in the Northwest, the presence of furbearing animals was made known to the European world. By 1790 British and Russian traders operated along the northwest coast. Before 1800 Russian and American ships were operating off the California Coast slaughtering seals, sea lions, and sea otters. Of these animals the sea otter was the most sought. Its fur brought a good price on

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the Chinese market. Moving southward the Russians established a base at Fort Ross, north of San Francisco. Working out of here they entered into contracts with American ship captains and also sent out some of their own vessels.³⁴ On these vessels were Aleuts who did the actual hunting from baidarkas or canoes. When fur hunting spread southward, parties of Aleuts and other hunters were left on various islands off the California Coast from the Farallones to the Cedros Islands to be picked up later with their catches.

Along the California Coast the Aleuts soon carved out a reputation for viciousness, ferocity, and cantankerousness. Not only did they attack the primitive Canalino, but they reportedly landed on the mainland occasionally and killed horses, cattle, and, sometimes, inhabitants. Often they clashed with other hunters, running them off and appropriating their supplies and furs.³⁵

George Nidever, who hunted sea otter along the California Coast, described an encounter on Santa Rosa Island with the fierce Aleuts. One day in early January, 1836, Nidever and his hunting companions noticed a brig in the upper part of the Santa Barbara Channel and remarked that it might contain Aleuts. The Indians had not been to the island in several years, but everyone knew they would some day return. Nidever and his party had agreed to fight them if they appeared. Several days later Nidever and two of his companions were paddling around off-shore looking for otter when they spied thirteen canoes, with two or three men in each, rowing hard through the fog toward them. One of the three let out a yelp of warning, and all paddled furiously for shore which they reached in a hail of buckshot. The three turned, fired on the Aleuts and drove them off. Nidever and his companions sought refuge in a cave near the shore where their supplies were stored. The next day the Aleuts were out hunting again, or so it seemed, and gradually worked their canoes closer to the islands. They then attempted a landing but gunfire from Nidever's party drove them off. Thereafter they made no attempt to harm the hunters on the island. Nidever later learned that the ship had been commanded by Captain John Bancroft and that three Aleuts had been killed and five or six were wounded.³⁶

Several years later, in 1839, Captain Bancroft felt the wrath of his Aleuts while hunting in the vicinity of Santa Cruz Island. They mutinied, killed Bancroft, mortally wounded his half-Hawaiian wife, and forced the ship's crew to sail them to their home in Alaska. As a result of the incident Hawaiian merchants refused to supply the necessary capital for similar future enterprises.³⁷

Men such as Captain Bancroft were considered by the Mexicans as *contrabandistas*, while men like Nidever had a perfectly legal right to hunt on the Channel Islands. The Mexican government issued licenses

to a few individuals who became hunting entrepreneurs. One such man was Captain William Goodwin Dana, a naturalized Mexican who had married Josefa Carrillo and settled in Santa Barbara. Dana received his license in 1829. In 1831 he sent two hunters, Yount and Galbraith, to Santa Rosa with supplies and Kanaka (Hawaiian) retrievers. His share was one-half of the skins obtained. Over the year similar arrangements were made with other hunters to go to Santa Rosa. Nidever in 1835 hunted on Santa Rosa under Dana's license for which he paid Dana "a share of the skins." Nidever returned to the island each year through 1841.³⁸

Sea otter were at one time numerous around the Channel Islands. The Canalino Indians, with their primitive weapons, had no difficulty killing them. Spain attempted to enter the fur trade in the late eighteenth century using the natives as a source of furs, but the venture failed, due in part to the inadequate number of furs supplied by the aborigines.³⁹ The greater accuracy of the musket and the single-mindedness and skill of the Aleut or American was needed to make the trade profitable.

During the early period, the hunter could stand on the shore and shoot the otter after which a Kanaka, hired for the purpose, would swim out and retrieve the dead animal. By the mid-1830's the hunter had to employ small boats and search for the decreasing sea otter. A technique sometimes used was for three hunters to locate the animals, confine them within a certain area, and then the nearest hunter would shoot the hapless animals as they surfaced to breathe. A particularly heartless technique was to capture a baby sea otter and use it as a decoy. The mother otter, who had strong parental instincts, would hear the frightened cries of her child and swim to the rescue. When within range a musket ball ended her life.⁴⁰

The skin of the adult sea otter measured about five feet in length and twenty-four to thirty inches in width. In 1802, pelts sold for an average of \$20.00 each in China. In 1837 Nidever, as a hunter, received \$35.00 for each skin. By 1846 the pelts retailed for \$150.00. The animals were becoming scarcer, and in 1870 the trade had become so slack that only two or three persons could engage profitably in it along the California Coast. Ten years later a fine pelt brought \$475.00 in London.⁴¹

Partially motivated by a strong desire "to hinder the many foreign adventurers from benefitting themselves with these considerable portions, whereby they may do great injury to our fisheries, commerce, and other interest . . ." the Mexican government in 1838 ordered the governor of Alta California

. . . to grant and distribute lands on said islands, to the Mexicans who may solicit them, recommending to you in particular the citizens Antonio and Carlos Carrillo, for their useful and patriotic services, in order that you may attend to them in preference, and grant them exclusively one of the said islands which they themselves may select.⁴²

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The latter statement reflects further motivation for granting the islands — the necessity of making political awards.

The order authorizing the granting of an island to the Carrillo brothers was issued in January, 1839, shortly after Juan Bautista Alvarado assumed officially the reins of the government of the Californias. Failure of the Carrillos to claim Santa Rosa Island for four years has been attributed by writers such as Bancroft to the Carrillo brothers.

. . . not deeming it at the time, perhaps, a very desirable acquisition.

Such was not the case. An animus had built up between the Carrillos and Alvarado during the 1830's when they had been vying with each other for power in California. When Alvarado finally emerged victorious he was not magnanimous enough to forgive and forget. Don José and Don Carlos petitioned Alvarado for Santa Rosa, but the petition was denied, and the island was granted on November 1, 1841, to José Castro, one of Alvarado's military commanders and a warm supporter. In late 1842 Manuel Micheltorena became governor, and in 1843 the Carrillos petitioned once again for the island, citing Alvarado's animosity toward them and the original order from the Mexican government to award them an island. Castro, claiming title to the island, protested the Carrillo petition. Micheltorena wanted to be fair to all parties and acknowledged Castro's and the Carrillo's arguments. He felt that Castro should not be forced to give up the island without some indemnification for his expenses in attempting to occupy it. Just what these expenses were is not clear from the records. The governor's decision apparently seemed fair to both parties, and it was agreed that the Carrillos would pay Castro \$2,000.00 indemnification. On October 3, 1843, Castro, upon receipt of the sum, gave up all interest in the island, and the following day Micheltorena granted Santa Rosa to José Antonio and Carlos Carrillo.⁴³

The Carrillo brothers did not long hold possession of the island. It is generally believed that the island was given as a dowry to two of Carrillo's daughters, Manuela and Francisca, when they married respectively John Coffin Jones and Alpheus Basilio Thompson. This tale is not substantiated by the deed. It says that the island was valued at \$3,300.00 "by competent persons," and that Manuela and Francisca on November 2, 1843, paid this amount, "one half in silver money of good quality and the other half in goods . . ." ⁴⁴ The sisters had paid about five cents per acre for the 62,696-acre island. Even at this price the Carrillo brothers had made a nice profit for one month's possession.

John C. Jones had been the United States Consul in the Sandwich (Hawaiian) Islands while Alpheus B. Thompson, a New Englander whose reported brother was captain of the *Alert* which had brought Richard Henry Dana to the West Coast, was Jones' business associate in the Islands. In California the two were co-owners of several ships and

engaged in the transporting of goods between Mexican ports and Alta California.⁴⁵

Thompson was either delegated to occupy the island or he just took the initiative. Whatever the case, he went over in the fall of 1844, taking with him cattle, sheep, horses and a carpenter to build a house and one or two corrals. He later claimed that the island had already been sold to him, but since land grants could not pass out of family hands, he was forced to transact the sale in his wife's name. He added that by the colonization act, individual land grants could not exceed eleven leagues, and since Santa Rosa was over fourteen leagues it was decided to also deed the island to Francisca's sister, Manuela.⁴⁶ If this statement is true, it may explain Thompson's initiative, but the statement must be considered in the light of the hot controversy raging at the time between Thompson and Jones for possession of the island.

According to testimony later given in the United States District Court, Thompson in September, 1844, took 270 head of cattle to Santa Rosa. Most, if not all, of these cattle belonged to Don Carlos and had the Rocking Horse brand on them. Later in the year fifty-one ewes, two rams, and nine horses were transported over.⁴⁷

The first house built was small, 24 feet long, 15 feet wide, and nine feet high. It was "a good plank house" with one door, one glass window, one "corridor," and a shingle roof, and was still standing in 1855. Sometime prior to 1855 Thompson built a large ranch house in a cypress grove where it was still standing as late as 1939. Other corrals were also built and the island ranch apparently prospered. Each year vaqueros were brought to the island "for the purpose of marking and ironing the cattle." These vaqueros were in addition to the three or four full time ones. The first full time vaqueros were "four Kanakas" who deserted a year later on a trip to Santa Barbara to buy supplies. They were replaced with three of local origin. By 1852 the rancho was prospering and reportedly had an income in that year of \$38,000.00. In the meantime Thompson had added brood mares with "a fine American stallion" and "a lot of hogs, rabbits [sic], etc."⁴⁸

The next five years, however, were to be marked by strife and a series of legal problems. On March 23, 1852, the law firm of Halleck, Peachy, and Billings submitted a petition to the United States Land Commission asking that the claim of Manuela Carrillo de Jones and the heirs of Francisca Carrillo de Thompson to the island be confirmed. On November 15, 1853, the Land Commission ruled against the claimants. The commissioners said the grant to and juridical possession of the island had been proved, but "no approval by the Department Assembly was ever obtained." Also, they continued, the original grant said a house should be built and the land cultivated within one year, but no evidence to indi-

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cate that either was done was presented, although the importation of sheep and cattle was shown.

A year later the claimants appealed the verdict to the District Court, and six months later the case was begun. This time greater testimony was presented. Witnesses included those who had worked as vaqueros on the island, the carpenter who had built the first house, and the ship captain who had carried both the lumber for the house and the livestock to the islands. Many legal documents, including the correspondence concerning the controversy between the Carrillos and Castro over possession of the island, were also presented. The evidence was conclusive, and the judge had no difficulty deciding on January 18, 1856, to overrule the Land Commission and confirm the claimants' title to the island.⁴⁹

About this time a dispute arose between Alpheus Thompson and John C. Jones over the island. Jones contended he owned one-half of the island and livestock. Thompson denied this claim, stating that Jones had not expended any money on the island, nor had he devoted any time to the operation of the ranch. Thompson also claimed he had spent "heavy amounts" to fight the possession case through the Land Commission and District Court. To defray expenses he sold some of the cattle and sheep on the island. Jones obtained an injunction prohibiting Thompson from removing any more of the livestock. At another time Thompson obtained a court order permitting him to remove 200 head of cattle belonging to the estate of Carlos Carrillo. Jones countered this maneuver by obtaining an injunction forbidding him to use the horses on the island "to do the work." Thus the struggle raged on. The court case which resulted was still pending in 1857 and reportedly was not settled until after Thompson's death.⁵⁰

Thompson's death, apparently in 1858, initiated the advent of the More family on Santa Rosa. The Mores were large land holders in Santa Barbara County. In 1859 Thomas Wallace More paid to the estate of Alpheus Thompson \$3,000.00 for its interest in Santa Rosa Island. In 1865 Alexander P. More bought from the estate of John C. and Manuela C. Jones for \$18,000.00 its one-half interest in the island. Three years later T. W. More exchanged with A. P. More his interest in the island for one-third interest in the well known Rancho Sespe. In 1869 Albert F. Thompson considered himself lucky to have sold his share in the island to A. P. More for \$1,000.00. The island had been much trouble and irritation to the Thompson children, and Albert's statement on selling probably reflected the attitude of all:

The Island has never yielded us anything. Could not sell to nobody but More. Could not sustain an action, and if More did not want to purchase it he could enjoy the possession of the same for a lifetime without interruption.

A year later Francis and Helen sold their interest in the island to A. P. More for \$3,000.00.⁵¹

T. W. More had purchased one-fourth of the island and apparently was pleased with his acquisition. The tax assessment rolls for 1860 show that he had on the island 1,000 head of cattle valued at \$3,000.00, 2,000 sheep at \$1,500.00 and 100 horses at \$500.00. The following year he was reported willing to sell his portion of the island for not less than \$20,000.00. At the time it was called the best sheep ranch in the county.⁵²

The Mores retained possession of the island until 1902. Except for an eleven year period, 1870 to 1881, when Henry H. More owned one-half of the island, it was in full possession of A. P. More until his death around 1898.⁵³

During the tenure of the Mores on the island, it was used principally as a sheep ranch. There were always a large number on the island. In 1874 the ranch foreman reported 60,000 head. Twenty years later 60,000 grown sheep plus lambs were reported. Thomas M. Storke, who managed the ranch for several months in the later 1890's, said that at one time during the life of A. P. More, 125,000 sheep roamed the island. One observer in 1893 said the island was considered one of the finest sheep ranches in California which had

... perhaps one of the largest flocks of sheep now owned by one man in California.⁵⁴

Shearing of the sheep occurred every six months for which about forty extra hands, usually "Spanish-Californians" with a sprinkling of Chinese, were brought to the island. A good shearer could clip about 100 sheep per day. After being clipped, the sheep, which were described as being of an ordinary California breed, were led to a dipping tank of caustic soda, sulphur and lime; the sheep would emerge dripping wet and a bright green color. In 1874 the annual yield of wool was reported as being 300,000 pounds. The income from the sale of this wool and sheep was reported in that year as being \$100,000.00, of which \$80,000.00 was profit.⁵⁵

In 1876 the wool market collapsed, and a big *matanza* (slaughter) was held. The sheep were killed and skinned and their carcasses tossed into kettles

... of enormous size, large enough to take in several hundred sheep at a time.

About 1,200 sheep per day were processed. They were boiled until their bones were softened, and then the carcass was placed in a press which squeezed out the tallow. The pressed meat was fed to the pigs. Only a little tallow was obtained from each animal, but the prices obtained for the tallow and the skins were high enough to make the *matanza* profitable.⁵⁶

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In addition to sheep the Mores raised "many fine horses and hundreds of fine blooded cattle for the San Francisco market." Wild hogs, dangerous to the "unmounted and unarmed man," were also on the island.⁵⁷ Wild hogs are not indigenous to the island, but where they came from no one seems to know. Some believe that they were introduced by early Spanish explorers. As far as can be determined this belief has no basis in fact. None of the accounts of early Spanish explorations mention pigs, nor do such people as George Nidever, who hunted on the island prior to 1843, mention wild hogs. It is probably that the hogs Thompson carried over to the island reverted to nature.

It is reported that A. P. More was offered \$750,000.00 for the island in 1890, but would not sell for less than \$1,000,000.00. These figures seem exaggerated since the probate of More's will in 1900 valued the island and stock, buildings, equipment and fences thereon at \$350,000.00. At this time there were 150 goats, twenty hogs, 180 horses, and 10,000 sheep on the island. This \$350,000.00 figure is probably near to the one Walter L. Vail and J. V. Vickers finally paid in 1902 when they purchased the island. Although the total price they paid is not known, it is known that one heir was given \$32,500.00 for his one-eighth interest in the island.⁵⁸

When they acquired the island Vail and Vickers, partners in a prominent cattle firm of Los Angeles, converted the island into a cattle grazing range. Later they introduced several species of elk and deer, and today these creatures of the wild roam the island with the domesticated cattle. The introduction of these exotic animals is reminiscent of a proposal by J. Ross Browne in 1874. He advocated stocking Santa Rosa with elk, buffalo, Japanese pheasant, English lop-eared rabbit, Mongolian sheep, llama and "various other rare and curious animals from foreign countries." The island would be a "grand zoological range" where hunters could come to display their skill and be assured of a prize.⁵⁹

Today the Vail-Vickers ranch on Santa Rosa, which specializes in Hereford cattle, is one of California's largest. The company shares the island with an aircraft early warning base. An important link in the Western Air Defense System, the base's radars scan the skies along the coast of Southern California to give warning of the approach of enemy aircraft. In 1958 some two hundred Air Force personnel and about thirty civilian manned the base.⁶⁰

NOTES

1. Carl St. J. Bremner, *Geology of San Miguel Island, Santa Barbara County, California*, Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History Occasional Papers, No. 2 (Santa Barbara: 1933), p.7.
2. Carl St. J. Bremner, *Geology of Santa Cruz Island, Santa Barbara County, California*, Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, Occasional Papers, No. 1 (Santa Barbara: 1932), pp. 32-33.
3. Chester Stock and E. L. Furlong, "The Pleistocene Elephants of Santa Rosa Island,

- California, "Science, n.s., LXIII, No. 1754 (August, 1928), p. 140; Phil C. Orr, "Santa Rosa Island Dwarf Mammoths," *Museum Talk*, XXIV, No. 3 (Fall, 1959), p. 25.
4. Phil C. Orr, "Santa Rosa Island Dwarf Mammoths," p. 28; Phil C. Orr, "Early Man on Santa Rosa Island," *Museum Talk*, XXXI, No. 3 (Fall, 1956), p. 44; Phil C. Orr, *Radio Carbon Dates From Santa Rosa Island, I*, Bulletin No. 2, Department of Anthropology, Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History (Santa Barbara: 1956), p. 7.
 5. H. M. Wormington, *Ancient Man in North America* (Denver: 1957), p. 199. Another secondary presentation of Orr's claims may be found in E. H. Sellards, "Some Early Stone Artifact Development in North America," *Southwest Journal of Anthropology*, XVI, No. 2 (Summer, 1960), pp. 162-163.
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 7. Philip Mills Jones, *Archaeological Investigations on Santa Rosa Island in 1901*, edited by R. F. Heizer and A. B. Elsasser, *Anthropological Records*, V. 17, No. 2 (Berkeley: 1956); D. B. Rogers, *Prehistoric Man of the Santa Barbara Coast* (Santa Barbara: 1929).
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 10. Rogers, *Prehistoric Man of the Santa Barbara Coast*, pp. 336, 339, 343, 354, 357, 366.
 11. Phil C. Orr, "Ancient Population Centers of Santa Rosa Island," *American Antiquity*, XVI, No. 3 (Jan. 1951), pp. 225-226.
 12. Orr, *Radiocarbon Dates From Santa Rosa Island, I*, p. I; Phil C. Orr, "Review of Santa Barbara Channel Archaeology," *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology*, VIII, No. 2 (Summer, 1952), p. 224.
 13. Phil C. Orr, "Chumash or Canalino," *Museum Leaflet*, XVI, No. 7 (Oct. 1941), pp. 78-79.
 14. Alfred L. Kroeber, *Handbook of the Indians of California* (Berkeley: 1953), map facing 526; Henry R. Wagner, *Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo, Discoverer of the Coast of California* (San Francisco: 1941) p. 56; Rogers, *Prehistoric Man of the Santa Barbara Coast*, p. 336; Hubert H. Bancroft, *History of California* (San Francisco: 1886), II, p. 34.
 15. Wagner, *Cabrillo*, 56; Kroeber, *Handbook*, p. 557; Phil C. Orr, *Customs of the Canalino*, Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, Occasional Papers, No. 6 (Santa Barbara: 1956), p. 8; Rogers, *Prehistoric Man of the Santa Barbara Coast*, pp. 331-332; Stephen Bowers, "Santa Rosa Island," *Annual Report Smithsonian Institution*, 1877 (Wash.: 1878), 320.
 16. Orr, *Customs of the Canalino*, p. 8. Orr reports Cabrillo as saying the Indians slept on the ground. Orr used an older translation of the Cabrillo summary log. Wagner, who has the better translation, rendered the pertinent passage: "They do not sleep on the ground." See Wagner, *Cabrillo*, p. 56.
 17. Kroeber, *Handbook*, p. 557; Orr, *Customs of the Canalino*, pp. 8-9. Orr reported a charcoal from the site of a former sweathouse of the Canalino on Santa Rosa, as being carbon dated at 2599 ± 360 B. P., which conflicts with Rogers' estimate of arrival of the Canalino on Santa Rosa at approximately 800 A.D. See Orr, *Radiocarbon Dates from Santa Rosa Island, I*, p. 5.
 18. Orr, *Customs of the Canalino*, pp. 23-24.
 19. *Ibid.*, 17-18; Kroeber, *Handbook*, pp. 560-564.
 20. Orr, *Customs of the Canalino*, p. 304.
 21. Herbert E. Bolton, ed., *Spanish Explorations in the Southwest, 1542-1706* (New York: 1959), 87fn; Frederick J. Teggart, *The Portolá Expedition of 1769-1770: Diary of Miguel Costanso* (Berkeley: 1911), p. 33; Kroeber, *Handbook*, pp. 558-559; Rogers, *Prehistoric Man of the Santa Barbara Region*, p. 334; Robert F. Heizer, "The Plank Canoe of the Santa Barbara Region, California," *Ethnologiska Studier*, V. p. 7 (1938), 205-207. In 1914 one of the last surviving Chumash constructed two plank canoes, one for the Smithsonian Institute and one for the Museum of Man in San Diego. The one in San Diego is presently in storage at the museum and is still in good condition.
 22. Henry R. Wagner, "The Voyage to California of Sebastián Rodríguez Cermeno in 1595," *California Historical Society Quarterly*, III, No. 1 (April, 1924), p. 17; Wagner, *Cabrillo*, p. 48; Bolton, *Spanish Explorations in the Southwest 1542-1706*, p. 88.
 23. Kroeber, *Handbook*, pp. 550-551.

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24. Rogers, *Prehistoric Man of the Santa Barbara Coast*, pp. 20-21. The theory that the Chumash disappeared because of contact with the whites is given further credence by the experiences of the lone woman of San Nicolas. She spent eighteen years scratching out an existence from the island, but when she was rescued and brought to the mainland to live with whites, she died within a few months. See Emma Chamberlin Hardacre, *Eighteen Years Alone* (Santa Barbara: c1950), pp. 21-22.
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27. William Henry Ellison, ed., *The Life and Adventures of George Nidever [1802-1883]* (Berkeley: 1937), pp. 44-109; Arthur Woodward "Sea Otter Hunting on the Pacific Coast," *Historical Society of Southern California Quarterly*, XX, No. 3 (Sept. 1938), p. 125.
28. Marguerite Eyer Wilbur, *Duflot de Mofras' Travels on the Pacific Coast* (Santa Ana: 1937), I, p. 191; Lorenzo G. Yates, "Fragments of the History of a Lost Tribe," *American Anthropologist*, IV (Oct. 1891), p. 373; Englehardt, *Santa Barbara Mission*, p. 292; Ellison, *Life and Adventures of George Nidever*, p. 36.
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30. Wagner, "The Voyage to California of Sebastián Rodríguez Cermeno in 1595," pp. 4, 17-18, 20.
31. Henry R. Wagner, *Cartography of the Northwest Coast of America to the Year 1800* (Berkeley: 1937), I, pp. 111, 113; Bolton, *Spanish Explorations in the Southwest, 1542-1706*, pp. 45, 87-90. Henry R. Wagner, "Spanish Voyages to the Northwest Coast in the Sixteenth Century," *California Historical Society Quarterly*, VIII, No. 1 (March, 1929), p. 57.
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33. Wagner, "The Names of the Channel Islands," pp. 21-23; Teggart, *Diary of Miguel Costanso*, map; George G. Heye, *Certain Artifacts from San Miguel Island, California* (New York: 1921), p. 25-26; Wilbur, *Duflot de Mofras' Travels on the Pacific Coast*, I, p. 190.
34. Robert Glass Cleland, *A History of California: The American Period* (New York: 1922), pp. 2-4; Bancroft, *History of California*, II, pp. 63, 93-96, 294.
35. Ellison, *Life and Adventures of George Nidever*, 40-44; Arthur Woodward, "Sea Otter Hunting on the Pacific Coast," pp. 119, 125; Adele Ogden, *The California Sea Otter Trade, 1784-1848*, (Berkeley: 1941), p. 125.
36. Ellison, *The Life and Adventures of George Nidever*, pp. 40-45; Ogden, *The California Sea Otter Trade*, p. 129.
37. Ellison, *The Life and Adventures of George Nidever*, p. 45; Ogden, *The California Sea Otter Trade*, pp. 129-130; Bancroft, *History of California*, IV, pp. 90-91; William Heath Davis, *Seventy-five Years in California* (San Francisco: 1929), p. 103.
38. Ellison, *Life and Adventures of George Nidever*, pp. 36, 40, 48, 55, 58, 107; Ogden, *The California Sea Otter Trade*, pp. 106, 128; Woodward, "Sea Otter Hunting on the Pacific Coast," p. 126.
39. Ellison, *Life and Adventures of George Nidever*, p. 45; Bancroft, *History of California*, I, pp. 438-442; Woodward, "Sea Otter Hunting on the Pacific Coast," p. 128.
40. Woodward, "Sea Otter Hunting on the Pacific Coast," p. 129; Ellison, *Life and Adventure of George Nidever*, pp. 36, 41.
41. Woodward, "Sea Otter Hunting on the Pacific Coast," pp. 124, 134; Ellison, *Life and Adventures of George Nidever*, p. 48; C. M. Scammon, "Sea Otters," *Overland Monthly*, IV, (Jan. 1870), pp. 25-30.
42. William Carey Jones, *Report on the Subject of Land Titles in California* (Washington: 1850), p. 60.
43. Bancroft, *History of California*, III, p. 581; Manuela Carrillo de Jones, et al, vs. United States, Case No. 117, U. S. District Court, in Bancroft Library, microfilm copy in library of Cabrillo National Monument, pp. 4, 74, 80, 84, 86-88. It would seem that Alvarado had illegally granted the island to Castro since Mexican law stipulated that a single grant to one individual could not exceed eleven leagues (48,824.16 acres); Santa Rosa is more than eleven leagues. See Jones, *Report on the Subject of Land Titles in California*, p. 4, and Zoeth Skinner Eldredge, *History of California* (New York: c1915), V, p. 145.

44. Yda Addis Storke, *A Memorial and Biographical History of the Counties of Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo and Ventura, California* (Chicago: 1891), p. 58; Southern California Writers Project, W.P.A., *Santa Barbara: A Guide to the Channel City and Its Environs* (New York: 1941), p. 73; Thomas H. Thompson and Albert Augustus West, *History of Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties, California* (Berkeley: 1961), p. 257; Ellison, *Life and Adventures of George Nidever*, 113; Jones vs. U. S., Case No. 117, pp. 5, 18; Patents, Book A, p. 202, Records Office, Santa Barbara County Courthouse, Santa Barbara, California.
45. Ogden, *The California Sea Otter Trade*, p. 181, appendix; A. B. Thompson to Abel Stearns, Monterey, Sept. 22, 1831; Historical Society of Southern California *Quarterly*, VII (1906-1908), p. 205; Myrtle Garrison, *Romance and History of California Ranchos* (San Francisco: 1935), p. 39; Thompson and West, *History of Santa Barbara and Ventura, Counties*, p. 257.
46. Jones, et al, vs. U. S., Case No. 117, pp. 49-52, 58-59; [Alpheus Thompson] to Timothy Wolcott, San Jose City, Alta California June 13, ?, 1857, photostate in possession of Santa Barbara Historical Society.
47. Jones, et al, vs. U. S., Case 117, pp. 49, 50, 67.
48. Jones, et al, vs. U. S., Case No. 117, p. 55, 57-59, 72; Owen H. O'Neill, *History of Santa Barbara County* (Santa Barbara: 1939), p. 366; [Thompson] to Wolcott, June 13 ?, 1857.
49. Jones, et al, vs. U. S., Case No. 117, pp. 1-131. Francisca died intestate February 26, 1851.
50. [Thompson] to Wolcott, June 13 ?, 1857; Thompson and West, *History of Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties*, p. 257.
51. Albert F. Thompson to John F. Dana, Santa Barbara, June 1, 1869, in possession of Santa Barbara Historical Society; Deeds, Book C, p. 288, Book D, p. 581, Book F, pp. 355, 356, 724, Book G, p. 670, Book H, p. 684, all in Records Office, Santa Barbara County Courthouse. Mary Isabel sold her interest to Francis in 1868. Two other heirs — John F. Dana, who was probably married to a Thompson girl, and Charles Thompson — are not accounted for. There were six Thompson children. John and Charles probably sold their interest in the islands in 1869 or 1870. According to one writer each heir sold his interest for \$1,000.00 in 1869. See O'Neill, *History of Santa Barbara County*, p. 366.
52. Robert Glass Clelend, *The Cattle on a Thousand Hills* (San Marino: 1951), pp. 120-121; W. W. Hollister to A. Dibblee, San Juan, February 8, 1861, typescript copy in possession of Santa Barbara Historical Society.
53. Deeds, Book I, p. 87, Book Y, p. 134, Records Office, Santa Barbara County Courthouse. A. P. More sold the one-half interest to H. H. More in 1870 for \$100.00, bought it back from him at the same price in 1881.
54. Thomas M. Storke, *California Editor* (Los Angeles: 1958), p. 80; J. Ross Browne, "The Island of Santa Rosa," *Overland Monthly*, XIII (Sept. 1874), p. 212; K., "Shearing Time on Santa Rosa Island," *Overland Monthly* XXI (May, 1893), p. 494.
55. Martinette Kinsell, "The Santa Barbara Islands," *Overland Monthly*, XVIII (Dec. 1891), 630; K., "Shearing Time on Santa Rosa Island," 494; Browne, "The Island of Santa Rosa," 212; Perry G. M. Austin, "Santa Rosa Island," *Noticias*, V. No. 3 (Fall, 1959), 10.
56. Thompson and West, *History of Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties* 257; O'Neill, *History of Santa Barbara County*, 366.
57. K., "Shearing Time on Santa Rosa Island," 494; O'Neill, *History of Santa Barbara County*, 366; Storke, *California Editor*, 80.
58. Kinsell, "The Santa Barbara Islands," 630; Deeds, Book 75, p. 33, Book 77, p. 345-357, 508, Recorder's Office, Santa Barbara County Courthouse; Austin, "Santa Rosa Island," 10.
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